

MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

Cost Savings and Efficiency Work Group

December 10, 2002

Conference Room 113, County-City Building

MEMBERS: Russ Bayer, Patte Newman, Jon Carlson, Mark Brohman, Melinda Pearson, Carol Brown, Greg MacLean, Brian Carstens, Duane Eitel, Roger Reynolds, Jennifer Brinkman, Rick Krueger, Jerry Schleich, Greg Wood, Allan Abbott (non voting); Absent: Mark Hunzeker, Duane Hartman, Rick Krueger, Greg MacLean

OTHERS: Kent Morgan, Steve Masters, Marvin Krout and others.

AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSION:

1. Welcome - Russ Bayer, Work Group & Committee TriChair

Russ Bayer opened the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

2. Meeting Summary Notes - November 26, 2002

There were no changes to the November 26, meeting notes.

3. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

1. Using the Neutral Facilitator Method - Karen Jensen, Olsson Associates

Russ recalled for the group that at the last meeting they began the process of going over their ideas which he felt was the core of what they wanted to accomplish. He expressed disappointment with the lack of constructive discussion about those ideas and referred to staff discussions about bringing a facilitator to handle the groups discussions, Russ reported that he and others had met with Karen Jensen the previous week to discuss what she can bring to the table in being a neutral facilitator to help the group to reach some conclusions about their ideas. Jerry, Jon, Carol, Kent, and Allan had also participated in the meeting which he described as an introductory interview process to find what will help us accomplish their goal in a short period of time.

Russ reported this meeting was to discuss numbers and Allan's group has most of the numbers completed which they had begun reporting to the Finance committee the previous week on water

and wastewater. He explained they aren't prepared to talk to this group about all of the numbers but believe they will have the numbers and the assumptions associated with them by this group's next Wednesday morning meeting. Russ reported while this will shift their work a little bit, it will work well for the group because it will allow them time to hopefully have a process in place and the numbers will also be available to allow them to digest the information and enable the group to hit the ground running.

Melinda asked if the members can get the numbers the day before their meeting so they can look over them and read some of the assumptions prior to the meeting. Kent indicated they can have what Finance already has and would e-mail that information to this group in time.

Russ explained when asking Karen to facilitate, he wanted to make sure she was neutral because her firm, Olsson Associates, has contracts with the City. He reported that Karen would explain her position to alleviate any concerns

Karen began by thanking the group and explaining she is a third or fourth generation resident in the City and reported she too had served on similar groups. She expressed her confidence that this group will have a major impact on the future of the City because of the thoughtfulness and time required to arrive at good decisions. She explained that good decisions are the focus of her work as a facilitator and while many think facilitators help a group brainstorm, she reported the neutral facilitator helps the group make the best decisions possible. Noting that there are many steps to the decision-making process that they will go through, she expressed hope she can help them accomplish this within the appropriate time frame.

Offering her help to make the best decisions and recommendations, she anticipated they would have a sense of satisfaction with the effort, but cautioned that meant talking and communicating with each other all the time. She asked the group to tell her immediately if they have concerns about the way she was facilitating a particular segment of the meeting and urged them to tell her candidly and, likewise, if she had concerns about directions the group process is going she will be real candid.

Karen explained the neutral facilitator is responsible for the process so it can be reasonable and effective and the group is responsible for the content, the comments made, for the analyses made and for the decisions that are made. She reported this will allow for a more effective way for the group to move forward than when the leader is a member of the group, because she has no vested interest in the group's discussions. Although an interested member of the community she will keep that buried and remain a neutral servant of the group.

Talking about her Olsson Associates affiliation, she noted that there were several members who are in engineering and architectural firms also who come with that expertise and viewpoint that the group is looking for. Although she is a member of an engineering firm in the City, she is being asked to be a neutral facilitator assured the group this is something both Olsson's and she live by constantly.

She reported that in her previous career in a marketing firm, she had worked with Olsson Associates who approached her to work with them as their in-house neutral facilitator for organizational development. She assured the group she will not convey conversations from this group back to Olsson's nor does she have projects at Olsson's that would be impacted by this group. She reported she belongs to the International Association of Facilitators and noted at one of their conventions and had been impressed when someone had spoken about the six traits of a neutral facilitator, and the sixth and most important one is to commit to a life of integrity. Feeling that is the only way a person can have credibility as a neutral facilitator but it is also one of a real strong Midwestern values. She invited all members to commit to a process of integrity and working with each other in that way they will have a terrific experience.

Melinda asked who was paying her and Karen explained the contract is between the City and Olsson Associates and the City will pay Olsson's.

She distributed the Process Overview sheet (copy attached) and explained this would serve several functions for the group and pointed out this sheet was to give the group a sense of what the group needs to do at this meeting and also what their accomplishments have been so far. She explaining the sheet contains information gleaned from this group's meeting minutes to include the previous meetings accomplishments. She said in a decision-making process it was important to make sure good things go on between meetings as happen at the meetings themselves.

Referring to the sheet, she said the task for which she was hired is to determine what kind of public input process the group wanted, what kind of workshop they desired, if any in January, and how will they use that input which is not shown on this sheet. She explained there are some things they need to figure out before they actually figure out the workshop. Karen referred the group to the Definition section of the material and suggested they would want to come up with their definition of what a successful outcome would be for this group process and also a definition of efficiency for infrastructure projects, noting that they would not address efficiency at this meeting. She reported a successful outcome for this group's process would be the starting point

5. Our Work Group's Process

Karen asked the group to think back to the point when they were asked to be a part of this group and jot down why each member said 'yes.' The group took a few minutes to write their responses and Karen then asked them to review their comments and succinctly write down why each member said agreed to serve. Upon completion of this task, she asked every member to post their brief responses on the wall for all to read.

While this activity was underway, Karen advised members when they stand up they have to be neutral and when sitting they can say anything they like (within reason) to facilitate better group dynamics. She explained when seated, all eyes are at the same level and equal, but when a person stands they have a stronger presence than those seated. She also explained that when an idea is offered by someone and posted on the wall, it is no longer attributed to that person and

when comments are made, they are made to 'the wall,' making the process neutral and making the information belong to the group.

She asked the group to sort related comments into categories, following which they named the four resulting categories: Shared Expertise/Experience; Protect/Maintain Quality, Positive Civic Involvement, and Efficiency and Cost/Savings. Karen pointed out this will serve the group to design a process to reach the member's expectations at the time they agreed to serve on this group. She suggested that this may help them fill in some of the blanks on the Process Overview sheet distributed to the group.

Karen observed that every meeting the group had so far included presentations or information that led them right into the heart of the work to be done and now, at this meeting they are involved in activity of this type. She asked for comments and Melinda reported this process would be helpful to define their goal and identifying what it would be to be successful. She indicated that earlier she could not have been so clear a month ago. Karen pointed out they have accomplished quite a bit and now it is time to make some order out of their discussions and figure out how they are going to work as a group. Greg Wood asked if these comments were the answer to the Definitions section of the page distributed and Karen indicated that would have to be determined by the group. Greg said that he felt to make this a successful committee would be to have measurable life cycle cost savings and when asked to clarify, he explained that meant you may pay more for today for an improvement but with the life of a street or road the long-term cost is less.

Karen asked the group to report some of the details they had written that would help clarify the big-picture response. Mark said to make sure the planning process goes in a positive direction, and when asked to define positive, he indicated that meant to him sustainable, friendly to the older neighborhoods.

Asking for additional comments, Melinda reported she felt they have city hall and the developing community on different sides of the fence and wanted to identify some of those things that the group considers to be inefficiencies and possibly resolve some of them. Carol Brown felt the development community had a lot of questions didn't think they had heard any of those questions and wanted to hear city staff responses to those questions to see if there is something to resolve.

Karen asked for more concrete things the group wanted as outcomes and Jerry Schleich indicated he wanted to validate or change the city processes as it relates to his perception of development; either know why they do what they do and understand the rationale behind it or change it so they understand it from his perspective.

Asking for additional comments, Karen asked Greg what firm he was with and he reported it was E and A and asked if he had anything from a hard engineering viewpoint that he would want as a successful outcome from this group's work together. Acknowledging that he had already provided some input, Karen asked Duane for his comments. He suggested that one of the

comments about lane widths and felt Greg's suggestion that we look at the whole life cycle of things and urged they need to be efficient, not cheap. Karen wondered if there was a definition of efficiency that the department of roads uses and Duane mentioned traffic flow and said city staff talked about level of service, etc. Jon pointed out that whatever the group does, his expectation is that the city will not suffer a loss of service, function or loss of aesthetics.

Karen reported it was important to have group agreement on what they want the outcomes of this process to be because that would drive what the group does. She asked the group to talk a little bit about how they are going to go through a decision-making process and what it means to do group decision-making which can be frustrating and, at the same time, can be far more powerful and effective than any one person alone or than asking City staff to do.

Distributing a page "the Power of Group Participation," (copy attached) Karen noted that after World War II sociologists began looking closely at how groups worked together to make good decisions. Clarifying that it actually began with the Hawthorne experiment with the light bulb be brighter and brighter which was a real turning point and then after World War II the field 'exploded' in how groups worked together. Referring to an article from *Psychology Today*, November, 1971, she reported NASA engineers were asked to make a decision about certain things that would happen if astronauts were on the moon and the research showed that group process results in better qualify than any one individual decision. She reported this led to the explosion in group process and felt it was necessary to credit the City of Lincoln is a city that understands the value of citizens' input and citizen groups working together.

She asked Russ to comment on debate and he said this started with a comment he made at the previous week's meeting that he liked working in small companies than running them and quoted Kent's response that benevolent dictators sometime work. He felt the idea of debate was appropriate but someone felt that was too harsh of a term but the reality of it is not that we have aggressive debate but that we have open conversation.

Karen said she realized that she had a narrow definition of debate as pro and con, yes and no and at a public meeting in another town she was leading earlier the city council said there had to be a debate and people had to stand up and speak for or against an idea. But she said there could still be debate on a number of viewpoints but pointed out they wanted to avoid in this group process is 'yes'/'no', pro/con for as long as possible. She referred the members back to the Process Overview material, specifically the Ground Rules for the Process, and directed their attention to the underlined items under this topic. She noted they had already made great progress on the 'Full Information' part, she indicated they had gotten presentations at the level of detail that is extensive and helpful from city staff, they had also asked questions and had conversations and dialogue, but what they still need to do more of is access the wisdom among all of the members. She reported that city staff recognized that and were beginning to go out with the information and then the members were the ones with the wisdom to move it forward. She explained that when speaking of Full Information, it was not just what they were learning from staff but what they bring to the table and what they learned from each other.

As a result, Karen said they need to have a process that emphasizes over and over having all of the members bring their viewpoints in. She explained ‘Suspended judgment’ was where the debate discussion came in because this includes the phrase, ‘in-depth dialogue’ but admitted that while something of a Pollyanna, she noted that many members have political viewpoints that are dearly held and others come representing certain groups and feel they have a responsibility to represent certain viewpoints and what she was asking the members to do was to suspend judgment until they get several steps down in the decision-making and not feel that a piece of information needs to be immediately evaluated. She asked the members to absorb the information and then when the group is ready, they will look for solutions that include everybody’s viewpoint instead of this side or that side is going to win.

Karen reported that on the “Shared responsibility’ part she needed to check with them on how much time they will have, especially between meetings, because some valuable activities can take place between meetings including analyses that can be made and brought back to the group or it may be more effective if the group has someone who can do this.

Going back to the first item in this section, Decision making, she noted that the formal charge of this group states that no official action without a formal vote of record, but did not define whether the vote could be a simple majority. She asked if they wanted to make decisions on 51% or a simple majority or whether they wanted to look for full consensus and in the neutral facilitator context, full consensus means that everybody agrees to agree for a set amount of time. She noted this implies the group would forward to the Infrastructure Committee only those recommendations that all of the group could agree upon, even if they agreed to try the recommendation for a year. Jerry recalled the group already agreed a simple majority would be the consensus and Russ explained the formal vote of record did not apply to the work groups so this group doesn’t have to follow that, but there was some initial conversation about consensus but it said if it looked like most of the people agreed, it represented consensus. Carol said if there was another strong viewpoint it should also be noted– a minority opinion would also be noted. Russ reported the group said they would not take a vote until they thought it was that close. Karen said they could work along pretty far before having to take that vote.

Jon asked if the group gained anything with a 51-49 vote because he wasn’t sure that the work group would have done the exploratory process but not sure they would have done the refining process if all the group send back is all of their ideas? He felt that was okay, but as a member of the larger committee, he was also mindful of the time frame involved hoping that the work groups would do some refinement. Russ said he never anticipated sending forward ideas. He said if the vote was 50-50, he didn’t think it would leave the group but he didn’t want one person to have veto power and Jon asked if more than 75% agrees will the group do some refining, indicating they did some hard talking and some hard choices and what they sent forward were those things that make it through that process. Russ indicated his answer was yes, they had done some refining. Karen explained she was throwing out these ideas but understood everyone was too new to her and this methodology to try to make a conclusion at this meeting but wanted them to think about that decision-making process they wanted to follow as a group.

Karen returned to the chart indicating the outcome for this meeting was to design the next month to two months of this process, specifically a workshop that they wanted just for themselves in early January where they can begin digging into the analysis of the information, filtering it, see what starts to bubble up as a kind of recommendation the group wanted to make. She said the other big thing is the public involvement process and what kind of public involvement the group wanted and in what format. Karen asked the group if they should start with public involvement and Jon asked to talk about public involvement because of his interest in the idea of the committee vs. how much more the public can dictate what we do in the next six weeks. Karen asked Jon to talk about what he had said at their small group meeting and Jon reported they have spoken earlier about having a public forum and when it should be done but another member said the committee is the public representing different sectors and he was trying to figure out the process they wanted. He wondered how much more of a process do they need, do they call in an expert, and thought his role was to listen to the group's experts and wondered if the process needed to be more than the committee.

Russ asked how many more ideas is the group going to come up with? He did not think more people would come up with ideas that were significantly different than the ones the group has already developed. He acknowledged he voiced some frustration at the previous meeting because the experts in this group were not talking and felt the value of having an internal group workshop was to force the group's experts to talk which may or may not lead to having outside experts. He noted that one of the proposed three workshops could be for this group to really get into conversations. Carol agreed with Jon, noting the group members who have expertise should bring their point of view to the group without bringing other experts. Jerry expressed concern with that because he didn't think of himself as a developer expert, but as a member of the community and didn't carry the developers message. Russ pointed out to Jerry he thought he was in a different position because he was on the major committee and his role was different than other experts on this committee. Jerry reported that simply because he is a realtor and home builder and bar association he didn't carry that baggage but reported he was on this group because he wanted to be involved and offer his expertise as a result of his experience. He clarified he did not want to be an advocate for any one of those groups. Carol asked various group members if their groups had given them something to bring ideas to the group. Roger said he had not received any indication from anyone about what they wanted him to say. Jerry suggested that if any group member was speaking on behalf of others it would be Mark Hunzeker because he was their representative. Various other members added comments at this time and Jon observed the difficulty could be because there are two different perspectives one of which was the political and Russ said when discussing the make up of the committee by disciplines, he didn't think people could spend many years on the job and divorce themselves completely from their representative group. He said the point is the members who represent specific disciplines have a point of view that can be contributed that will help the other members to understand various concepts.

Carol explained her concern was that the homebuilders had some strong concerns, and if they are not represented at these discussions, they will feel they were left out of the process. Russ said their way of thinking is represented on this group by members here who are in the homebuilders,

LIBA, the Chamber, the neighborhoods and other groups should all feel comfortable that people who are known to share their way of thinking are represented on this committee. Jennifer asked if there was value in sending them a letter indicating this committee was soliciting their input and put them down on the list of ideas and, if needed, get one of them to make a presentation. She suggested this could alleviate the feeling that anyone on this group has to represent them.

Russ pointed out this group was not sure what to ask them and once they got together first in a workshop environment then the group could identify areas where no member understands and then bring in the appropriate expert. Karen noted she was sitting down now and said while she was semi-neutral, she wanted to offer an opinion. Groups seem to work best when the members behave in the way the previous speakers had described: they were a member of this group but were not just representing loyalty to a group outside this process. She said they were both going to learn from the people here and are going to contribute knowledge. She felt that might be worth acknowledging that the work group members are representative of other groups and Russ added that the four categories established at this meeting could become this group's goal statements and while members bring shared experiences their priority is civic involvement and desire to protect the community with the goal of cost savings and efficiency.

Referring to the information the group developed and posted on the wall at the beginning of the meeting, Russ said it appeared to him that in prioritizing those comments, the column on the right would be the lowest (first, not least) and proceed to the activities in the columns to the left. Karen suggested each would on the previous activities. .

Karen distributed material describing the continuum of public impact. She pointed out if the group decided to have additional public input beyond the committee members, they would decide what level of impact this group wanted members of the public to have, and then design a workshop or whatever based on how much input the group wanted from the public at large, then they would know what they wanted to do. Last week the small group suggested that probably this group is somewhere between inform and consult. Carol noted at the small group meeting they had eliminated empowered and collaborate and Russ said he felt when this group was defined as the 'public,' they moved all the way over to collaborate, because they had no power but when they invited the community to participate, they clearly wanted to keep them informed with a desire to provide them with feedback on how their information helped this group. He did not recall they would be to the involved level. Jerry reported that the group did that in a sense when they said they would bring in an engineer on things they didn't understand that they would involve those people by making presentations and allowing them to give input and the group would ask questions, etc. Another member reported the problem was that they weren't getting the dialogue or debate and Karen suggested the group needs to get a structure in place. The member continued saying he thought because an idea was on the yellow sheet it was not their responsibility to defend it, that it was just an idea. He continued by saying when the group needs expertise and a member didn't feel it was appropriate to do that, they would bring in those people. Greg clarified he was talking about contractors in heavy construction, such as highways, who may have ideas for cost savings.

Melinda said she felt informing was just the opposite because she thought the workshops were not for the public but to get the public to inform them. She said this group is seeking information not explaining to the community what we are doing, but asking the community if there is anything the group is missing. She didn't feel the purpose was to educate the public about what they are doing. Roger said it would be great to hear from the people that are in the field doing the work, building the roads, to tell the group about how inefficient it is to build one quarter of a mile of a road at a time but how much nicer and effective it would be to have the funds to do a larger section and do it right the first time. He thought the group should hear from the people actually doing the work to help this committee make those decisions. Karen asked Duane about his experience with public participation if he had a preference. Duane said he liked the idea of having some other experts involved such as mentioned by Roger or Greg. As far as public involvement is involved, he was not sure the group needed to do that.

Carol reported that staff receives a lot of repercussions if the whole community is not involved. Duane asked if the main committee is doing some type of public involvement and Kent reported he didn't think that decision has been made at this point. Duane agreed there should be some public involvement. Karen proposed an idea that had not been finalized, but said this group could have its own workshop for half a day where they can invite in some specific people to give you more information on certain pieces of whatever will be addressed at that workshop set for the work group and she indicated that would be a good four hours whenever it is scheduled. Then, if the group wanted to expand it and let the public have a little more say in what you are doing or a little more involvement, the group could do something that is basically an open house, not a formal workshop. Suggesting if there are six issues that have come forward, each of these could be addressed at individual stations and anyone in the city who wants to come over the course of two hours can go to each station covering that issue where they can give a little feedback.

Russ agreed to bringing people in, but indicated his confusion was because he was reading below the line (on material distributed earlier) because he was concerned about a promise to the public. Russ said this group might have to get together long term and from that there could be issues they couldn't address and then bring in invited guests and then maybe have the open house. This allows the community to see what this group has done and in some way consult with them and show them what this group has done.

Duane said looking at the whole city and the whole system of what this group is doing, they are in the collaborate part. He thought the material was designed for the whole construction finance for the whole city and this group is looking at a small part of it which puts this group in the inform part of it. Karen asked the group to get down to what they said they want to do as a work group. Greg asked about this workshop and cost efficiencies, he was hearing about two extremes and that is the part this group has to weigh to get true costs with Karen suggesting there may be hidden costs. Greg felt that's why there are different aspects of the question because the engineers and contractors have a view about how best to do a project and Carol added that's why the city people here are saying the impact on the public is why they haven't done it that way and then this group should make a decision or recommendation on what we think is the best way.

Karen asked the group to chart out a timeline and what the steps will be. Noting there is a meeting in the next week, 12/18, at that time this work group will have the presentation on the numbers which will take most of the meeting. Then there will be a break over the holidays then the timeline goes into early January. Russ said he thought the group should talk about the half-day session and asked the group to bring their calendars. He pointed out they have already scheduled three 3-hour session beginning the 2nd, 3rd and 4th week with Kent reporting the dates of the 15th, the 23rd and the 30th as the workshop dates in addition to meeting dates. Russ indicated he did not think they were pushing off the workshop but with Karen's request for an additional hour to accomplish something, so the question is do es the 6 to 9 o'clock become 4 to 8 o'clock or 5 to 9 or 2 to 4 o'clock.

Karen asked if the group could do an 8a.m. to noon or once or twice do a Saturday meeting that would be helpful, but Russ expressed his bias about weekends being for family and indicated if next week the group could write it in on a Tuesday or if the group says a Saturday that would be fine. He asked the group talk next week about what they are going to do that first week in January before the workshops start. He acknowledged that he and Kent had built in a week after the holidays to plan some stuff and Karen offered to put together a proposed process between next week and the end of January to be e-mailed to the group with everyone sending their comments back to facilitate the discussion next week. Russ said he was still concerned about not getting to how the group is going to look at an idea on the list. Karen agreed, saying that was the next thing and while she was talking about the steps to the process, what they also need is to know how they are going to structure the analysis of the decision.

She asked the group to look at the Approach for Analyzing section on the first sheet distributed to see how the group's ideas on the yellow sheet can be analyzed but she felt that there are cross cutting themes, and there may be some big picture systemic recommendations the group wants to make that would apply to any one of the categories of infrastructure. If the group just looks at the ideas one by one they might miss the more systemic ideas. She noted that there are also a lot of items to think about that apply to each of the categories of infrastructure.

Asking Russ if this is what he meant, Russ indicated that no matter the approach, how are we going to do it? He said he wanted to know at the end of each discussion period how are we going to make the decision. Karen reminded the group about her comments about suspending judgment to try to keep open mind, listen to other people and try to absorb everybody's viewpoints before making up their minds. She suggested they go through the steps of the decision-making process as shown on the material distributed. But when evaluating the options and make the decision that is when the members can no longer suspend their judgment and then make their decision. Referring to the notes posted on the wall, she explained they could emerge as criteria on how the discussion should proceed to evaluate the ideas one by one. Russ indicated he was not sure how they would evaluate the options and suggested they needed to sit down and talk about that. Russ said that would be where the resources they need would jump in to provide their input.

Jon said some of the points on the list need to be made more specific. Russ said that would come under 'define the issue.' Karen said there was so much on that list a lot of which is good food for thought so if the group tries to delve into all of it they will be overwhelmed. She suggested they need to find a system to narrow it down and Russ pointed out that was his question. Jennifer, the frustrating thing is that there may be an idea but doesn't have to be defended. Jon suggested a dot exercise and Karen agreed, suggesting they need to think through it a little bit more before they narrow down what is on the yellow list.

Russ said he felt they have the knowledge except exactly how they are going to do it. Karen repeated that in January the group is going to have a regular 1-1/2 hour meeting on the 7th and asked they go through a simple priority process to see what items on the yellow sheet will be addressed in the workshop. Russ asked anyone to come up with what process or system that they will use to discuss or debate each idea. Karen asked everyone to be thinking about that and said she would develop a starting place for that system for the group to look at their next week's meeting. Russ said he wanted to make sure they have the time to look at the ideas.

Jon asked about the session for next week and Karen responded the second item for that meeting was to plan to half-day session for a half hour at that next meeting. She reminded the group their homework was to think about what they want the next steps of the process to be and her homework was to have something as a springboard for discussion.

Karen said she would distribute material to the group quickly by e-mail. Kent asked if at the next meeting the group would set the date for the next session and Russ agreed they should lock down January, clarifying he was not advocating changing anything but may expand the time frame. The issue for the meeting the next week will be the 12 year presentation and decide the process and dates.

6. Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

*I:\FILES\PLANNING\MIFC\cost savings work group\12.10 cost savings efficiency mtg notes
December 15, 2002 (7:07AM)*